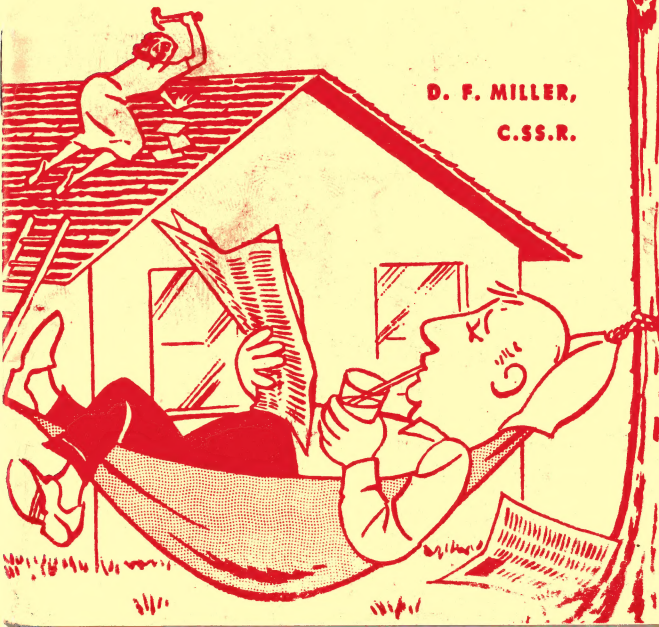


Ten Faults OF HUSBANDS

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C.S.S.R.



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LIGUORIAN PAMPHLETS
REDEMPTORIST FATHERS
Liguori, Missouri**

Imprimi Potest:

**John N. McCormick, C.S.S.R.
Provincial, St. Louis Province,
Redemptorist Fathers
Feb. 21, 1960**

Imprimatur:

**St. Louis, Feb. 24, 1960
✠ Joseph E. Ritter
Archbishop of St. Louis**

*Many marriages fail completely,
or prove unhappy, because the
husband fails his wife in some of
the important ways here listed.*

TEN FAULTS OF HUSBANDS

D. F. MILLER, C.SS.R.

This will be strictly about husbands, and about the faults and sins and shortcomings of many husbands to-day. Note the word "many." We do not say "all." There are many husbands who, when they and their wives read this, will not have to accuse themselves or be accused of a single one of the glaring faults of husbands that are here listed. But there are many others who are making their homes exceedingly unhappy and even endangering their marriages by one or more of these faults and sins.

We shall not list among the ten types of bad husbands the two kinds that are guilty of the gravest crimes

against marriage. These two are the adulterous husband, and the one who makes no effort at all to provide for his family in an economic way.

The adulterous husband is considered so corrupt by Christ and His Church that they officially make his proven adulteries adequate reason for a faithful wife to separate from him forever. Thus the husband who commits adultery is thereby mentally (if not effectively) deciding to cast off his wife, to destroy his home, to abandon his children. No man can fall much lower than that.

The unproviding husband is flouting the law of nature according to which he has the primary obligation of working to support his wife and children. If a husband refuses to work or to support his family, except for cases of grave physical or mental illness, he too is deliberately choosing to destroy his home.

We exclude these two major defects of husbands from the list below, not only because they are so bad in themselves, but also because husbands who fail their wives in half a dozen other ways will often defend themselves on the ground that they are not guilty of the great sins named above. Any mention of their shortcomings as husbands brings from them the quick reply: "After all, I'm faithful to my wife, and I make the money that supports the home. What more can a wife expect?"

Let it be said at once that a wife has a right to expect a great deal more than this, even though many wives have to go for years on end without getting what is their due. Alas, so many grown-up, married men are still so much like spoiled children that even this sharp revelation of their faults will not change them. Those of good will, we are sure, will read and take notice; those whose

selfishness has wrapped them up completely in themselves will pay no heed.

One final word before we describe the ten most common types of husbands who fail their wives. This is no denial of the fact that wives may also fail their husbands, sometimes to the point where they gravely contribute to the faults of husbands mentioned here. We are not now concerned with such faults of wives. What we are concerned with is the failure of many husbands to live up to the promises they made to love and cherish and be helpmates to their wives as long as they live, no matter what faults turn up in their wives.

These are the 10 common types of such failures:

I. The "You-do-your-job-and-I'll-do-mine" husband.

This is the husband who adopts

the principle that, besides being faithful to his wife, the only contribution he is called upon to make toward the upkeep of a home and the raising of children is the money he makes. He selfishly and wrongly imagines that it is his wife's part of the bargain to go it alone in keeping the home tidy and neat and respectable; to feed, clothe and train the children; to correct and punish them and to tell them what they may and may not do; in short, to do all the work involved in making a home and raising children by herself alone.

This fault does not appear to be very grave during the first year or so of marriage, before there are any children. Even then, however, the first signs of it appear.

It is after two or three or more children are born that many husbands prove themselves to be lazy, inconsiderate.

erate, independent and selfish. They work seven or eight hours a day in their office or shop, whereas the wife's work is never done, requiring her to be on the go sixteen or seventeen hours a day. They come home from work at night and ensconce themselves at the television or with a newspaper or in a closed-door den and never raise a hand to help with the household chores or to keep the children occupied in a wholesome way. The same pattern of selfishness is adopted on their Saturdays and Sundays and holidays.

Marriage is a partnership in which both husband and wife are intended to work together for the decent upkeep of their home and, above all, the proper supervision and raising of children. Apart from his work at making a living, the husband is bound to give reasonable help to his wife in raising the children and running the

home. To fail or refuse to do this is to make a slave out of his wife.

II. The "money-pinching" husband.

This is the husband who thinks that he should have autocratic charge of all the finances of the family, and that he should keep his wife on an allowance or a dole or a budget that barely covers the stark necessities of housekeeping and her personal requirements.

Such husbands refuse to trust their wives with money, or even with a voice in discussions of how the family funds should be used. In many cases this same kind of husband is very lavish in expenditures on himself and his pleasures, while he makes sure that his wife will never be able to spend anything except for basic necessities, and demands a strict accounting of even such expenses.

This lack of trust, this miserliness, this financial tyranny, is one of the sure ways to kill a wife's love, and to make marriage, instead of a partnership, a master-slave relationship.

III. The "I-need-outside-recreation-and-you-don't" husband.

This is the man who feels that he must have his nights out and his days off for bowling, golf, the club, the tavern, the gathering with the boys, but who rarely if ever gives his wife an opportunity for relaxation away from the constant duties of the home. As to taking his wife out with him once in a while, he considers that out of the question. In his mind, "she ought to love just staying home and working."

This is positively inhuman. It is like saying, "I am a human being, and therefore I need recreation. My wife

is not a human being and therefore should need no recreation."

IV. The husband who is married first to his business, and only second (or last) to his wife.

This man is different from the one who works his eight hours a day and then; through laziness, refuses to lift a hand at home to help his wife or to do anything for or with his children. This husband is a dynamo of energy, but ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent of his energy and time are spent at his business, in trying to make money, in getting ahead, and one-tenth of one per cent is devoted to his wife and home.

This is no criticism of the husband who takes an extra job to help his family financially, or who puts in extra study to make himself fit for a better job. These things can be done

without complete neglect of a wife and children. The man who can forget that he has a wife and children in favor of his business interests should never have married.

V. The "mamma's boy" husband.

Marriage does not release either a husband or wife from the duty of honoring and loving their mother and father. But it does make duties to their spouse supersede duties to their parents. That is what God said clearly about Adam, the first man and the first husband: "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh." (Gen. 2:24)

The "mamma's boy" husband never quite leaves his mother. He permits her to have more to say over his actions and plans than his wife.

A wife may have planned for weeks, with the approval of her husband, for some trip or outing or relaxation with her husband; if, at the last moment, mamma says no, then the husband can't go.

A husband and wife may have, out of charity, given a place to the former's mother in their home. For major, not minor, reasons this may create an impossible situation. The mother is obviously jealous of her son's wife. She constantly interferes in the management of the home. She is a bad influence on the children. She is driving her daughter-in-law to distraction and a nervous breakdown.

In this situation a good husband will do one or both of two things. First, he will have a stern, unyielding talk with his mother, telling her that only if she stops nagging at and interfering with his wife and children can

she remain in his home. If this fails to change her, he will make arrangements for her to live elsewhere.

The bad husband, the "mamma's boy" husband, won't care what happens to his wife and children. His mother comes first. He takes her part against his wife. He listens to her even when she diabolically encourages him not to have more children. He lets his wife suffer immeasurably rather than deal sternly with his mother.

VI. The husband who is unreasonable and un-Christian in regard to sex.

Unreasonableness in regard to sex is strictly a by-product of paganism. If put into words, it would be expressed somewhat as follows: "Sex-enjoyment is something that I refuse to dispense with or moderate in any way. I have a right to as much of it as

I desire. I may demand it of my wife under any circumstances and she is bound to give in to me."

This pagan attitude creeps into the thinking of too many so-called Christian husbands. God knows that there are countless influences at work in the world to foster such thinking. He also knows that He has given to His followers motives and means for keeping sex in its place, that is, in subordination to reason, faith and charity.

The bad husband, under this head, refuses to consider such circumstances as his wife's ill-health, mental or physical; her many burdens with children already born; his obligation to make the union between husband and wife a source of real joy and happiness to both, etc.

If circumstances deprive him of what he considers his selfish right, he refuses to seek the help God offers

him in frequent Communion, and too often seeks sinful indulgences that make him a traitor both to his wife and to God.

Besides being selfish, unreasonable and over-demanding of his wife, a husband may fail seriously by insisting that his wife cooperate with him in sins of contraception. He holds over her the bludgeon of his threats that, if she refuses to sin with him, he will sin with someone else. This is the last stage in vileness, when a man uses his authority as head of the family to plunge both himself and his wife into continuing habits of sin.

VII. The drinking husband.

A man does not have to be a hopeless alcoholic to wreck his home and to destroy his wife's love by drinking. Indeed, the final stages of alcoholism are often the result of a man's having lost his wife's love and done great

damage to his home by inordinate habits connected with drinking.

For example, a man may spend so much time in taverns or cocktail bars that his wife and home are all but completely neglected.

From such parties he may not come home completely drunk, but he will usually be a different man than the one whom his wife once loved. Sometimes he will be mean and testy and conscious of the need to defend what he knows to have been indefensible neglect of his home. Or he may become sensual in an animal-like way. Or he may be maudlin in an irresponsible way. In any case, he is killing all the love his wife once had for him.

VIII. The gambling husband.

Gambling can become a disease like that of over-drinking. It can afflict the

man who has an inferiority complex and thus has deep-rooted worries over the fact that he is not earning as much as he would like to for his family. So, he lives and acts on the ridiculous conviction that one of these days he will make a killing at gambling, and thus show his wife and children that he is a better man than they thought he was.

The disease of gambling can also afflict the sanguinic husband, who craves popularity, cannot resist a game of cards at higher stakes than he can afford, likes to flash money about at racetracks and bookie joints as though he were without worries or uses for his money.

The gambling husband keeps his wife in a state of petrified uncertainty. She never knows when his week's or month's wages will be squandered on a bet or in a game. There is only

one cure for such a man, and that is total abstinence from gambling.

IX. The jealous husband.

The jealous husband is the one who feels uncertain about his wife's love, often because he knows he is guilty of faults that make him undeserving of it, and who foolishly thinks that he can hold her loyalty to him only by preventing her from being friendly with anyone else.

The jealous husband would like to imprison his wife behind a high wall and a moat. He does deprive her of every kind of social life that he can forbid or prevent. He is suspicious of every innocent, friendly contact his wife makes with others. He tries to keep her separated completely from her own family.

This jealous possessiveness, this attempt to imprison a wife apart from

all normal human contacts, defeats its very purpose. It transforms any feelings of love the wife once had for her husband into feelings of hate. It makes a wife's duty of fidelity to her husband a thousand times more difficult than it should be.

X. The husband who never manifests his affection for his wife.

This is the husband who never gives any outward sign, by word or action, of the love he has for his wife. If she were to ask him whether he still loves her, he would say in a bored, offhand way: "Of course I love you. Now don't bother me."

Such a statement does not mean a thing to a wife, or rather it may mean so much that it will lead to a deluge of tears. Every husband should know that, no matter what he says, he does

not truly love his wife unless he shows and expresses that love in many day-to-day ways. Without the slightest insincerity, but with a renunciation of selfishness, he should often praise her appearance and her work; remember anniversaries with presents; express sympathy for her burdens; above all, just reassure her of his love.

The husband who refuses to manifest his love for his family is usually the same one who refuses to lift a hand to help her with her domestic tasks. Apart from the sexual part of marriage, he wants to live his own self-centered, egotistic, independent life, as though he had never solemnly promised to enter into an all-out partnership with her in establishing a home.



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The Liturgical Press
Francis' Church, Melbourne, C.1